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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MEXICO 001766

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR WHA/MEX AND INL

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [SNAR](#) [KCRM](#) [MX](#)
SUBJECT: WEAKENING OF GULF, SINALOA CARTELS GENERATES
MEXICO'S SPIKE IN VIOLENCE

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Charles V. Barclay. Reason:
1.4 (b), (d).

1.(SBU) Summary: Disruption of drug trafficking operations in Sinaloa and other key narco-zones has sparked conflict between the smaller cartels operating under the Sinaloa Cartel, led to shifting allegiances and contributed to the wave of killings here. This is a trend security analysts expect will continue as federal and military and law enforcement activities force individual cartels to look out for their own interests and adopt new strategies. This phenomenon most recently has been demonstrated in the conflict between the Sinaloa Cartel, headed by Joaquin & El Chapo8 Guzman, and its former subsidiary, run by the Beltran Leyva brothers. It is compounded by the formation of a new partnership between the latter and the traditional Gulf Cartel enforcers, the Zetas.

High Profile Killings Linked to Intra-Cartel Conflict in Sinaloa

2.(C) Conflict between the Sinaloa-based factions, exacerbated by increased law enforcement pressure, may have been directly responsible for the recent deaths of both senior police officials and Cartel members. Stepped up federal actions against the Sinaloa Cartel earlier this year uncovered deep frictions between the Beltran Leyva brothers and their former bosses. The split may have begun some months back, when El Chapo associates began to fear that violent tactics favored by the Beltran Leyva brothers would bring down too much heat on both organizations. It came to a head with the arrest of Alfredo Beltran Leyva in January during an operation planned and led by Federal Police Commissioner Edgar Millan Gomez. As reported earlier, Embassy sources speculate that the Guzman himself provided the intelligence that led to Alfredo's arrest. Sources also believe that Arturo Beltran ordered Millan's assassination, as well as the death of El Chapo's son, Edgar Guzman, in retaliation.

Gulf Cartel Fractures

3.(C) Calderon's aggressive push in Tamaulipas and Nuevo Leon has also rattled the Gulf Cartel and offered opportunities to the Zetas. Law enforcement sources tell the Embassy that a leader of this Gulf Cartel enforcement group, Heriberto Lazcano, has been working with the Beltran Leyva brothers since mid-2007 in the wake of successful GOM actions against the Gulf Cartel (and particularly the extradition to the U.S. of its leader Osiel Cardenas Guillen). Mexican media report that the Public Security Secretariat (SSP), Attorney General's Office (PGR), and the Defense Secretariat (SEDENA) believe that in fact the Gulf cartel has divided into two

organizations: a Zetas Cartel and the remains of the Gulf Cartel. In close association with the Beltran Leyva brothers, the Zetas now control trafficking in at least 12 Mexican states. (Note: Embassy law enforcement analysts see this as less the birth of a new cartel and more a further fracturing and regrouping of already fractious cartels that have always appeared more monolithic than they actually were.)

4.(C) Corroborated by numerous DEA confidential sources, there appears to now be a loose alliance between some Zeta and the Beltran Leyva organization which will likely contribute still more internecine violence and further weaken the Sinaloa Cartel. Zeta hit-men recently arrested in the state of Sonora told authorities they were deployed to the state to shore up Beltran Leyva operations and fight El Chapo's operatives. For his part, El Chapo's status as Mexico's most-wanted criminal has made it nearly impossible for him to conduct business-as-usual, say law enforcement sources. Meanwhile, the Gulf Cartel remains in place, but is severely compromised by splits among remaining leaders after the removal of Osiel Cardenas.

Comment

15. (C) Comment: Pressure from inside and out have changed the nature of both the Gulf and Sinaloa Cartels. The current wave of narco-violence is a hallmark of their further weakening. The apparent Zeta-ABLO alliance, if solidified, would represent a significant power shift in organized crime in Mexico, creating another pole in the cartel world. One thing is clear: Calderon's aggressive strategy of

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confronting the Cartels has clearly rattled Mexico's major narco-players, promoting shifting alliances as each sub-element seeks to maximize its own position, with often violent results. End Comment.

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